



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School



'To grow in Wisdom and in Grace'

English Policy

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The Contribution of English to the School's Curriculum

At Sacred Heart Primary School we recognise the crucial importance of studying the English language. Improved performance at reading, writing and spoken language will enable our pupils to express their thoughts and ideas more fluently, accurately and, ultimately, to their greater satisfaction. This will also help them to deal more successfully with other curriculum subjects, while enriching their lives beyond school. The teaching and learning of language skills are, therefore, given a high priority in our school and where possible the creative curriculum and ICT will be used as tools. Our overarching aim for English is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. We aim for our pupils to:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

At Sacred Heart Primary School we encourage all children to become independent learners and be confident in all strands of learning. The children will be given opportunities to speak in a variety of contexts and learn to listen to and value the views of others.

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum in England: Framework Document (2014).

Curriculum Delivery

In reception through to Year 6, children are taught English within their classes. Through differentiation and the support of Teaching Assistants, all children will receive high quality teaching and appropriate support in order for every child to reach their full potential. Children may receive additional support if necessary outside of the English lessons. Children that have an IEP may also be withdrawn in order to receive intervention that focuses on the child's more specific individual needs. A clear lesson objective and success criteria are a feature of all English lessons. Working walls may support learning in the classrooms. Assessment informs planning and reference is made to the National Curriculum in medium term plans. The use of computing enables children to use and apply their developing skills in English in a variety of ways. We encourage children to use ICT as a resource for learning, whenever appropriate. We provide a rich and varied experience for pupils to draw on in their writing and reading which should include the whole curriculum.

Approaches to Spoken Language

The four strands of spoken language: speaking, listening, group discussion and drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life. We aim for children to be able to speak clearly, fluently and coherently, to be able to listen attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy and contribute to group discussions effectively. We achieve this by:

- giving our children confidence in themselves as speakers and listeners by showing them that we value their conversations and opinions. We also encourage a respect for the views of others.
- being aware that as adults, we provide a model of speakers and listeners in our day-to-day interactions with them and with other adults in our school.
- helping them to articulate their ideas and provide purposes and audiences for talk within a range of formal and informal situations and in individual, partner, group and class contexts.
- by providing opportunities to perform to a larger audience, in assemblies and productions, where children's efforts and skills are acknowledged by staff, parents, carers, visitors and peers.
- by providing a range of experiences where children can work collaboratively and participate in opportunities to reflect on talk and explore real and imagined situations through role play, hot-seating, drama and discussions.

- by developing the children's ability to listen with attention and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and where necessary, asking and responding to questions appropriately.

Approaches to Phonics

The teaching of phonic skills is embedded within English teaching in each class. Additional provision is made each day in discrete Phonics sessions using Twinkl Phonics. This comprises learning different graphemes, focussing on oral and aural phonological skills and sight vocabulary. During these sessions children are also explicitly shown how to apply their developing skills to their writing.

There is more information about how we teach phonics on the school website. See [here](#)

Approaches to Reading

Pupils have opportunities to undertake guided, shared and independent reading throughout the school. A diverse range of group reading books and a staged reading scheme are available. We do not use any one published scheme to teach reading, instead we believe that it is important to provide pupils with a selection of reading books and experiences from different genres and subject matter, therefore we use Little Wandle, Oxford Reading Tree complemented by thematic books. Electronic texts are also available for shared reading. When it is felt appropriate for individual children, they may become 'free readers' and choose from the class library. Reading age tests are undertaken throughout the year to identify children who require extra support with their reading (see assessment timetable). Staff are deployed throughout the school to work with children in order to improve their fluency, intonation, decoding skills and comprehension. Home reading is encouraged and is an integral part of the child's development. In order to have strong communication between teachers and parents/carers, each child has a reading journal where both the staff and parents can write comments about how the child is progressing with his/her reading. Children have the opportunity to use books from the school library for independent research. Reading challenges are offered within school and pupils are encouraged to undertake the annual county library reading challenge. An annual reading week is held along with a book fair to further promote reading.

Approaches to Writing

To develop our children as writers we:

- treat children as writers, from the earliest stage, who have ideas that they will want to communicate, building on writing skills they have acquired and their knowledge of print from their environment.
- provide experiences where the children can acquire confidence and a positive attitude to writing.
- develop and sustain writing skills by providing opportunities for children to write for a range of purposes and audiences.
- use guided writing sessions to model writing skills, teaching children how to compose, amend and revise their writing.
- teach children to become critical readers of their own writing by using self-evaluation and checking their work independently for sense, accuracy and meaning.
- teach grammar and punctuation in the context of children's own writing, as well as through discrete lessons.
- teach children to develop their ability to organise and present imaginative and/or factual writing and poetry in different ways.
- teach strategies for spelling to enable children to become confident and competent spellers.

The school follows the Literacy Curriculum Spelling Seeds programme which enables the children to recap on the previous year's spelling patterns and then introduces new patterns and sight words. This programme is in line with the National Curriculum for spelling. Identified children receive extra spelling and phonics support when appropriate.

Handwriting Approaches

Handwriting begins in the E.Y.F.S with mark-making and patterns. All pupils are given access to a wide range of writing tools and mediums to practise the early fine motor skills. The needs of left-handed children, or those with physical difficulties are also taken into consideration and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention. Pupils are encouraged to develop fluent lines of correctly orientated letters from an early age and emergent writing is encouraged. We believe that discrete handwriting sessions where children's formation and pencil grip can be readily overseen should take place at least once a week and more frequently in the foundation stage. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting are taught and modelled using a range of

resources. The national expectation at the end of year 6 is that children will join their handwriting. Staff use resources from Nelson to teach individual letter joins with the cursive style. This begins in year 2 with discrete lessons following a clear scheme of progression. As the children move up through the school they are encouraged to think carefully about the presentation of their work and to develop clear, legible and fluent handwriting. When the children have reached a clear level of good handwriting they may qualify for a school pen licence.

Cross-Curricular Links and ICT

Teachers seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links where relevant. They plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

Assessment and Target Setting

Work is assessed in line with the Assessment Policy.

- Teachers use developmental feedback in order to identify where children have included elements of the success criteria, set next steps targets and to give children the opportunity to revisit their work in order to make improvements.
- Summative assessment is used three times a year in order to assess the children's writing against the school's ARE grids.
- Writing targets will be generated as a result of ARE assessments.
- Reading ages will be assessed throughout the year using the Salford Reading Test or Holburn reading tests, depending on age or ability. (See assessment policy)
- Summative assessment is used three times a year in order to assess the children's reading against the school's ARE grids.
- Spelling ages will be assessed throughout the year using the Graded Word Spelling test (See assessment policy)
- Year 6 pupils undertake SATs in May, Year 2 Sats in May and Year 1 Phonics screening in June

Inclusion

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. More able children are identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

- Children with identified SEND in English receive tailored support
- Children who are identified as having additional needs with reading, receive extra support
- More able children in English are identified and challenged appropriately. Challenges for these gifted pupils are provided within English lessons or in addition through a range of wider opportunities.

Equal Opportunities

All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Parental Involvement

Parents can play a vital role in the development of English skills. We aim to foster a strong home-school partnership regarding reading, using reading diaries as a tool for communication between school and home. Many parents support Book Week and Poetry Week by offering to come and read stories to the children. Parents provide support for handwriting, spellings and various genres of writing that may be set for homework.